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Damaging Information in Hoover's Files Reported

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 — Thousands of pages of documents from the long-secret files of J. Edgar Hoover, who directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 1924 until his death in 1974, contain defamatory reports on many of the nation's most powerful political figures, it was reported today.

In an unsigned article, the magazine U.S. News & World Report said it had reviewed more than 7,000 pages of documents from the Hoover files that had been released to Athan Theoharis, a historian at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis., under a Freedom of Information Act request.

The article said the documents showed that during five decades as head of the bureau, Mr. Hoover "drew on the wealth of defamatory information at his fingertips to curry favor with Presidents and other officials who used the bureau's resources to intimidate persons who criticized him or the F.B.I."

Professor Theoharis, in a telephone interview from his home in Wisconsin, said the documents generally confirmed the previous findings of the Select Senate Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. There really is

no smoking pistol in the papers," he said.

He said, however, that the documents appeared to show that the F.B.I.'s Washington field office regularly conducted electronic surveillance of a number of embassies during which derogatory information was obtained about many political figures. This information was then passed on to Mr. Hoover, he added.

Some of the documents described by the account involve matters that have already been disclosed.

The magazine said one set of documents, for example, summarized the "alleged sexual adventures" of John F. Kennedy as a young naval officer, a Senator and President. Other memos, it said, detailed how Lyndon B. Johnson "sent the bureau on political errands and then demanded that no records be kept of his requests."

The available record also indicated, according to the magazine's article, that Mr. Hoover gave secret assistance to Thomas E. Dewey in his unsuccessful campaign against President Truman, and had critical dossiers prepared on Adlai E. Stevenson, the Democratic Presidential nominee against Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956, and on George S. McGovern, the Democratic nominee against President Nixon in 1972.